Valerius Licinianus Licinius | History | Research Starters | EBSCO Research

Valerius Licinianus Licinius

Related civilization: Imperial Rome

Major role/position: Military leader, co-emperor

Life

Before becoming involved in imperial politics and the problem of succession, Valerius Licinianus Licinius (vuh-LEHR-ee-uhs li-sihn-ee-AN-uhs li-SIHN-ee-uhs) served in the Roman army, rising in rank to become second to Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximinianus (Maximinus), who named him co-emperor. Licinius ruled over the Danubian provinces, Illyricum, and other Western Roman territory. A capable military leader, Licinius defeated his rival Maximinus to rule as co-emperor with Constantine the Great from 308 to 324 c.e. despite periods of hostilities between the co-emperors. Actual fighting broke out in 316 c.e. Licinius was partially defeated. He lost some of his territory but was able to have his son Licinius II named as successor along with the sons of Constantine the Great. War between the co-emperors broke out again in 322 and continued until 324 c.e. Licinius suffered two serious defeats at Adrianople and Chrysopolis that destroyed his ability to field any more troops. He was captured by Constantine the Great and executed in 325 c.e. His successor, Licinius II, was executed in 327 c.e.

Influence

Licinius probably subscribed to the Edict of Toleration promulgated by Galerius in 311 c.e. This edict granted official toleration to all religions, including Christianity. However, as Licinius's opponent Constantine the Great became openly favorable to the Christians after his conversion, Licinius began to persecute them. Despite being defeated by Constantine, Licinius was a skillful military commander and a capable provincial administrator, particularly in tax matters.

Bibliography

Barnes, Timothy D. *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Frend, W. H. C. *The Rise of Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

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